



CONGRESSWOMAN
ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN'S
NEWS AND VIEWS

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515
Official Business



Ileana Ros-Lehtinen
M.C.

Dear Friend:

As your Member of Congress, I want to share with you information on recent legislative initiatives that affect our great region of South Florida.

We are a proud and vibrant community with unparalleled potential for improving our quality of life. Miami-Dade is truly a spectacular area that one is both honored and humbled to represent in the United States Congress.

It is my hope that this newsletter will give you a glimpse at developments in Congress and continuation of efforts to address various issues on behalf of the people of the 18th Congressional District of the State of Florida.

EDUCATION REMAINS A TOP PRIORITY

As a former educator, the realization that the profound impact of a quality education has on our society is enormous. **I will continue to support the improvement of education so that our children can become the leaders of our nation.**

As an ardent devotee of sound education programs and the benefits they bring to the students of our country, I fully advocate increasing funding for education in the State of Florida. I continue my support of President Bush's **"No Child Left Behind"** and the desire to make sure that a high quality education is available for every child.

I have submitted requests to the Members of the Appropriations Committee **on behalf of the University of Miami, Florida International University, Miami Dade College, Barry University, St. Thomas University, and other higher education institutions.** These requests will allow the Universities to have greater access and opportunity to educate our South Florida Community. It is also crucial that we make public

education a top priority, from kindergarten to college. **Our children are the future of our great country.** The valiant fight will continue in order to make sure that children are protected and afforded every opportunity available to them. I have co-sponsored legislation such as the National Amber Alert Network Act of 2003, which enhances the operation of the national communications network to facilitate the recovery of abducted children.



Ileana and President George Bush speak on education

ENVIROMENTAL PROTECTION MUST REMAIN A PRIORITY

A crucial initiative in Miami-Dade County is the cleaning and dredging of the **Miami River**. The river is a vital resource to our community. As one of my top priorities, I led the South Florida congressional delegation in securing funds for the dredging and maintenance of the River

The Miami River received a substantial amount of funding in the appropriations process. A total of \$6.8 million was granted to contribute to the efforts to revitalize the river. I am now working to obtain additional funding for these projects.

One of the defining natural resources of our South Florida community is the **Florida Everglades**. We must all work to preserve this beautiful and unique environment. The Water Resources Development Act included approval for the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP). I support CERP, and I was a co-sponsor of the Everglades National Park Protection and Expansion Act. Significant steps have been taken in the Everglades restoration process as a result of CERP.

Another crucial initiative for which I am working to get funding is **beach renourishment**. I have supported a request for \$3.8 million to renourish approximately 8,000 feet of eroded shoreline in South Florida. Our local beaches are an important destination that promotes the success of Miami-Dade County's economy.



Ileana meets with South Floridians to speak on the vitality of the Miami River

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Affordable housing is an important issue affecting our community. I have been a long supporter of initiatives and ways to bring down the high cost of housing to our neighbors. During this Congressional session, a co-signed letter addressed to Secretary Mel Martinez urging him to not cut public housing operations was supported.

I also co-sponsored H.R. 1276 - The American Dream Downpayment Act that eliminates barriers for first time homebuyers. The Department of Housing and Urban Development estimates that this assistance would help make homeownership a reality for 40,000 families annually.



Ileana meets with children and their parents to speak on affordable housing

In addition, I have corresponded with Secretary Martinez urging him to continue the public housing drug elimination program across South Florida. This program enables the safety and security of these residents.

We must place our united efforts in providing affordable housing to the public. I will commit my energy in bringing more proposals that will provide adequate housing for our friends and neighbors in South Florida.

THE PROTECTION AND DEFENSE OF OUR HOMELAND ARE VITAL

Protecting the security of our nation is one of the top priorities of the 108th Congress. The U.S. government has no more important mission than securing the homeland from terrorist attacks.

I am working in Congress to obtain funding for several Homeland Security initiatives in Miami-Dade County. A few examples of these efforts are:



Congresswoman Ros-Lehtinen meets our armed forces to discuss security issues

- *Obtaining funding for first responder equipment for the Miami-Dade Fire Rescue Department.*
- *Increasing safety and security measures for Dade County Public Schools.*
- *Increasing the number of customs inspectors at Miami International Airport (MIA).*
- *Increasing the presence of Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service agents at MIA.*
- *Emergency Response Center for our hospitals.*

A STRONG AND SECURE ECONOMY FOR SOUTH FLORIDA

I have co-sponsored legislation that will allow Florida taxpayers to deduct their state sales taxes from their federal income tax.

The American taxpayer is one of the most hardworking individuals in the world. To ensure that South Floridians get the most from their paychecks, I have supported legislation that returns the people's money to them.

Individuals will also be helped by recent legislation passed in the U.S. House of Representatives by:

- *Increasing the **child credit** to \$1,000.*
- *Increasing deductions for married persons filing jointly.*
- *Eliminating the death tax.*



In addition, legislation that aids small businesses across South Florida by increasing their bonus depreciation and how much they can expense has been fully supported. This assistance will help businesses across South Florida by allowing industries to enlarge their workforce and increase earnings for their employees.

I will continue to devote my time and efforts in Congress to strengthen our economy. I pledge to lead in a bipartisan effort to bring more jobs and economic prosperity to South Florida.

A SAFE AND PROSPEROUS SOUTH FLORIDA

It is critical that we work together to protect South Florida residents. I believe that it is the fundamental responsibility of society to exercise and foster a tender and strong concern for every member of society.

The protection of the people of South Florida is of extreme importance to me. It is critical that we work together to ensure that the people of South Florida are able to live in a safe environment free from crime and violence. It is with great pride that assistance to organizations such as **Youth Crime Watch of America** has been given to assist them in their strive to create an environment free from crime and violence so that our children will be able to flourish.



Their hard work and devotion have profoundly changed the lives of many of our young people. I am working with other Members of Congress to make sure that Youth Crime Watch of America is able to secure much needed funding through the appropriations process to continue their tireless efforts.

As a Member of Congress, I realize the profound opportunity I have been afforded to impact change. I will uphold that responsibility.

Illeana gathers with law enforcement officers to discuss her commitment to crime prevention

Legislation has been introduced during this congressional session that will give the US Attorney's Office in Florida an opportunity to have more flexibility and retain a higher number of counsels. These tireless anti-crime are at the frontlines of the battle against terrorism and drugs-trafficking.

ACCESS TO HIGH QUALITY HEALTH CARE

Great joy comes from working with many dynamic South Florida organizations committed to enhancing the health and well being of our community. I am dedicated to making sure that the quality of **health care** available in our community is of the highest caliber. I am also dedicated to making sure that each and every member of society has access to high quality care.

I have co-sponsored **The Fair Care For The Uninsured Act**, which allows tax credit for **health insurance**. It further requires each health insurer, HMO, or HSO to participate in health insurance safety net to assure the availability of health insurance to the uninsurable.

In addition, I have co-sponsored the **Medicare Medical Nutrition Therapy Amendment Act of 2003**. This important legislation would expand coverage of medical nutrition therapy services under the Medicare Program for beneficiaries with cardiovascular disease.

The health care needs of the South Florida community are of the utmost concern to me. I have worked diligently to procure funding for such important projects as **The Pediatric Neurological Brain Institute at Miami Children's Hospital**, a new medical facility for the **homeless at Camillus House**, and several projects at **local hospitals**, among many other local projects.

Thank you for allowing me to express my views and news of current events. Please feel free to contact my offices in both Miami and Washington, DC for any assistance or further questions.



Illeana meets with mentors to discuss health care for our children

WASHINGTON, DC
2160 RAYBURN BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20510
(202) 225-3931

DISTRICT OFFICE
9210 SUNSET DRIVE, SUITE 100
MIAMI, FL 33173
(305) 275-1800